

but Paul detected their plan, and made it known to the centurion, who prevented it, by ordering the soldiers to cut away the boat. Paul then encouraged his fellow voyagers to take food; they had taken little or none for fourteen days. Vs. 27-37.

I. Land Reached, 38, 39.

V. 38. *When they had eaten enough*; at the persuasion of Paul (see Connecting Links). *They lightened the ship*; a sailors' term. This was the third time this had been done (compare vs. 18, 19). The sailors' object may have been to diminish the depth of water which the ship drew so as to enable them to approach nearer to the shore before striking. Or, the vessel may have been sinking so fast that it was necessary to throw the cargo overboard to prevent her from sinking. *Cast out the wheat*; which the ship was carrying from Alexandria in Egypt to help in feeding the people of Rome.

V. 39. *When it was day*. Was ever dawn more welcome than after the weary waiting of that anxious night? *Knew not the land*. It was the island of Melita, or Malta (ch. 28: 1), about 60 miles from the southern headland of Sicily, now belonging to Great Britain. The island was frequently visited by Alexandrian ships, but this part of it was not recognized by the sailors because it was far away from the main harbor of Valetta. *A . . creek*; Rev. Ver., "bay," since known as St. Paul's Bay. *Beach* (Rev. Ver.); a smooth shore, on which the sailors could run the ship with a chance of saving the lives of those on board. *Took counsel*, etc. (Rev. Ver.); discussed the best means of getting the vessel to the shore, sorely crippled as she was.

II. The Ship Wrecked, 40, 41.

V. 40. *Casting off the anchors* (Rev. Ver.); the four anchors which had been let down from the stern, v. 29. These were now abandoned, and the ropes were cut, so that the ship would move shorewards bow foremost. *Loosed the rudder bands*. The pair of paddle-shaped rudders, one on either side of the stern, had been lashed above the waves while the ship lay at anchor, and were now lowered again for use. *The foresail* (Rev. Ver.); the sail that would cause the ship to move toward the shore with greater precision and swiftness than any other.

V. 41. *Where two seas met*; either a shoal separated from the shore by deep water and washed by the sea on either side, or a neck of land projecting from the shore. *Ran the vessel aground* (Rev. Ver.); into "a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves." *Stern began to break up* (Rev. Ver.); while the crew and passengers crowded to the forepart of the vessel.

III. All Saved, 42-44.

Vs. 42, 43. *The soldiers' counsel*, etc. Each prisoner was chained to a soldier, who was answerable with his life if his charge should escape. The soldiers' advice, therefore, was prompted by fear for themselves. *Centurion, willing to save Paul*. The officer had for Paul the admiration of one brave man for another; and besides he was grateful to the one who had been the means of saving crew and passengers. *They which could swim . . first to the land* (Rev. Ver.); that they might be ready to help the rest.

V. 44. *Planks, and . . other things* (Rev. Ver.); pieces which were broken away from the timbers of the vessel. *All safe to land*; and so Paul's promise (vs. 22-24) was fulfilled. There were 276 on board, v. 37. This is the end of one of Paul's perils by sea, 2 Cor. 11: 25.

Ch. 28: 1-10 tells of the welcome given to the shipwrecked company by the people of Malta; of how it came to pass that Paul was first regarded as a murderer and then honored as a god; and of the cure of the father of Publius, the chief man of the island, and the consequent honors showered upon Paul and those with him.

Light from the East

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A ROMAN SHIP—When the Romans crossed from France to Britain, about Paul's time, they embarked in galleys. These were ships that used sails when the wind was favorable, but were able to defy the less violent winds if they were contrary. Galleys were driven forward by scores of rowers, arranged on either side of the boat and often in tiers, one row above another, the upper row or rows with longer oars. Galleys were the warships